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MEMOIRS

OF

WILLIAM A. GUNTON,

AND

*His*

HIS WIFE MARY R. M. GUNTON.



MEMORIALS

OF

WILLIAM A. GUNTON,

AND

HIS WIFE MARY R. M. GUNTON,

CONSISTING OF

Funeral Discourses,

BY

REV. JOHN MARTIN AND REV. BYRON SUNDERLAND.



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# ADDRESS OF REV. J. MARTIN

AT THE FUNERAL OF

MARY R. M. GUNTON,

Died February 20, 1853.

WHAT a change is made in a few short days and even hours here, when all our boasted happiness is brought to an end. Fast following in our footsteps, as we carelessly hasten on, is the fell destroyer, with his foot of velvet and his heart of steel. We heed not his noiseless step, until by some sudden and perhaps overwhelming blow, we are made too sadly conscious of his presence and his power. Into how many of our dwellings has he already entered, since even this year began its course! *And he has been here.* Behold his work! How sad the change! O! what a blighting is this of fairest hopes, of envied happiness! The tidings of this death came to me like a clap of thunder. My heart failed me when I heard it, and I could only bow in grief and submission, saying, "Thy will, O God, be done." Only a few days previous I had left the family unmoved by a single serious disquietude, and happy in the reasonable prospect of her speedy restoration to health. And these few days

sufficed to blast the fair prospect and spread gloom and mourning through the dwelling, which seemed devoted to prosperity and joy. Here then, is a scene to touch and move our hearts. We view it with tearful eyes and prayerful solicitude. Not from duty only, but from affection, do we now weep with those that weep, and ask of God to comfort and defend them in this great trouble. O, let us share, as far as it is possible, the burden which has been laid upon them, and cheer their drooping souls by every assurance of Christian sympathy. Let us feel, brethren, the ties of our common faith drawing us near to them and to one another, and awakening all our kind affections for them. And O, that He, who has thus smitten, may graciously heal and restore some measure of comfort to the stricken hearts of this bereaved family.

Think of their loss. It is indeed no ordinary affliction;—a wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister. All these relations she filled; filled them with a dignity, affection and purity which awakens our admiration, but gives poignancy to the grief with which we lament her. At all times we feel the attractive power of female loveliness, and especially when heightened by the charm of a winning courtesy. None are insensible to such influences, whether it be the child or the man. Such qualities



may well be coveted, for they possess all power for good. With the young especially they are persuasive, and they are the objects of our peculiar care and solicitude. They are our hope, and around them we should seek to throw every influence that can help their childhood and win them to a virtuous and useful life. And I have marked attentively the good effects of so kind a temper, especially towards the young, by which, "she being dead, yet speaketh." There are those children among us, I am sure, who will carry to their graves, though in distant years, the pleasant memory of the gentle dead, whose smile and caress so won their young and susceptible hearts. It is indeed a beautiful trait to seek to adorn oneself with the soft features of an affable and condescending temper, and which would drive away the shadows and the sorrows which so often rest upon the human brow, and restore a sense of confidence and joy. Crossed as our lot is by many a care, and grief, and woe, so that even childhood weeps with bitter tears, how beautiful is that one whose smiles and affection can win us from our sorrow and soothe the beating of a troubled heart. Ah, that is eminently the sphere of woman, and blessed indeed is she who is thus adorned with the manifold graces of a kind and gentle nature. How amiable, how irresistible, how attractive is she, shining where she does not seek

to shine, eloquent even when silent, and gaining all by submission, by patience, by self-denial.

I have thus adverted to some of the feminine virtues and graces which resided in that fair form, but let us meditate a moment longer on that which surpasses all the rest. Though adorned as a pattern of conjugal and filial attachment, and possessing many generous qualities, her chief excellency after all, appears as we behold her arrayed in the robe of unfeigned piety and triumphant faith in God. And thus she "walked before the Lord in the land of the living." This it is which brings us consolation, and helps to remove the heaviness from our spirits. This brings a healing balm for our wounded hearts, for "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

I am sure I may speak of her thus without infringing on the proprieties of this solemn occasion. It is due to the sense which we entertain of her amiable and attractive qualities, the remembrance of which cannot fail to awaken pleasant and kindly thoughts for many years to come.

And thus I desire to commend her virtues, and to express the desire, that many among you may cultivate and exhibit the like amiable and pleasing qualities of her, whose young life, so full of promise, has been suddenly cut short. It goes to my very heart, both as pastor and friend, thus to follow, day after day, the beloved ones of my charge to the

grave, and to find their work and labor done, just as I have built my earnest expectation upon the help they should afford me in my ministry. And it seems to speak to all of us who remain, in deep and solemn tones, "Work ye, work ye, while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work." It seems to say also, in tenderest tones, "Love one another." Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another.

O, how soon the shadows which have crossed her path may darken our own, and stretch themselves over all our earthly prospects, and we like her shall descend into darkness and the tomb. Let then, our gathering around these beloved remains, tend to quicken all our powers towards the attainment of our salvation. And while we now realize the greatness of the work that remains to be done, and the need there is to be up and doing, let us think of the reward of the humble, the charitable, the pious soul; let us think of her reaping because she fainted not, and look forward to that glorious harvest when we too shall be permitted to gather our sheaves rejoicing. And what a day will that be—a day of joy and gladness, when friends long severed shall meet again at the appearing of Jesus Christ, and the ties of love and friendship be purified and perfected in the presence of God and of his Son, amidst the joy of the heavenly world.

# ADDRESS OF REV. J. MARTIN

AT THE FUNERAL OF

WILLIAM A. GUNTON,

Died April 1, 1854.

LET us rejoice with trembling, that we are admitted to the fellowship of the great God, and are made partakers of his grace through the gospel of his Son. Let us seek our support from above while our earthly props are failing us, and as the outward man decayeth, let us see to it, that the inward man is renewed day by day. Around us, while we speak, all is changing ; fading as the flowers in the blast of the cold north wind. None are exempt. And of man it is said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Yes, my brethren, this is the end of all flesh. It is the end of youth in spite of all his charms. We see him today walking forth in his strength, and gracefulness, and beauty ; his cheek radiant with health, and his eye beaming with intelligence, and as we behold him thus, we build our hopes upon him, and scarcely think of the decay and death, which in secret, are ever near to prey upon the fairest and most cherished objects of our affection. Again we

see him, and all is changed, sadly changed. God has taken away his breath, and all that remains is the pale, lifeless corpse of the one so much admired and beloved.

“Our life is then but a vapour, which is seen a little while and then vanisheth away; as a tale that is told and remembered no more, or as a wind that passeth over and cometh not again.”

The man is thoughtless, indeed, who is not humbled with these reflections. These are surely the things to move us; to awaken our sympathy; to call forth our tears; to excite our deepest interest in the one thing needful; to lead us to call incessantly for help, till we shall find a sure and never failing refuge in Him “whose days are without end and whose mercies cannot be numbered.”

My brethren, were I to consult alone my own feelings on this mournful occasion, I should not speak one word, but follow with a stricken heart these beloved remains to their last silent resting place. No slender and uncertain ties bound me to the deceased, but acquaintance had grown into friendship, and friendship for a high-principled and intelligent young man had ripened into affection of no common strength, as I observed his progress in the knowledge and obedience of the Gospel. His position among us was one of peculiar responsibility

which he strove zealously to fill, and by his zeal, activity and liberality, gave promise of much usefulness in the position he had chosen, and in the church of God. It was my cherished hope and earnest prayer, that he might be long spared to flourish in the house of our God, and by the force of his active mind, and consistent piety, greatly advance the cause of the Gospel among the people in whose midst Providence had wisely placed him; and from whom He has thus suddenly removed him. We bow to the stroke in grief and in tears. In disappointment and perplexity, we call upon God; our eyes wait upon Him, until He have mercy upon us. On a former occasion, similar to this, a year ago, an occasion in which *he* felt a deep and sorrowful interest, I then remarked, in these words, of her, dear indeed to him, dear to all who who knew her: "It goes to my heart, both as pastor and friend, thus to follow day after day, the beloved ones of my charge to the grave, and to find *their* work and labor *done*, just as I have built my earnest expectations upon the help they should afford me and the comfort they should bring me amidst the cares and labors of my ministry." And now these words are true of him upon whom our eyes have looked with so much affection and hope. He has gone from among us,—gone to a brighter and nobler

sphere. Of this we are sure; and we may now think of him, as one worthy to be cherished in our remembrance and whose name will long live in the wide circle of our community. I desire then to speak the language of truthful eulogy and to express the feelings of a bereaved pastor's heart, when I commend him thus, as one who was lovely in his life, and over whose sad and early fate we may well shed the burning tear.

When I first heard this melancholy story, I knew not where to turn,—my mind was filled with a strange consternation. In time, *prayer*, our truest refuge, calmed my troubled thoughts. I sought for light amidst the gloom. I turned to the correspondence of my young friend. I sought in his letters to me, for that consolation, *dearest of all* at such a moment as this. He had often conversed with me, and of late, being much from home, had written to me about his spiritual concerns,—and now I felt that every word was precious to me, to all who truly loved him,—every word that could assure us of his religious state of mind and meetness for the summons which had reached him so suddenly.

He was naturally, and almost timidly averse to speaking on this solemn subject, even to those most deeply interested in his spiritual welfare. This often grieved him. He felt a generous gratitude

for every such kindness, but the reluctance continued. It is not an uncommon experience, we know, and often when the *tongue is silent*, the heart beats warm and true to the appeals which stir it, in its inmost depths.

Peculiar circumstances had *postponed* the *public* profession of his faith, a question long since deliberately, prayerfully, and resolutely decided upon. In one of his recent letters to me, he speaks of this as "the cherished wish of his heart," about which above all other subjects he desired to converse with me. Again, he says: "I am most happy then, my dear pastor, to tell you, that I have fully determined with the grace of God, to come out from the world and declare myself openly a follower of Jesus. I desire your frequent and earnest prayers, that I may be upheld and strengthened in the Christian life."\*

\* In another letter, he says to me: "I have not rashly made up my mind to this,"—a public profession,—“and it is only after months of consideration and self-examination, that now no longer doubting or hesitating, I have fully and freely determined on this cause. And having so decided, I purpose, with your approbation, to present myself for confirmation at the time of the Bishop's next visit to our parish, and I desire your frequent and earnest prayers that I may not bring discredit on the Christian name.”

In another letter, the same sentiments are repeated; but written from Boston, and while his sister, Mrs. B., was very ill. In it he speaks most affectionately of her and her children; but in a strain of sadness also, from what he then apprehended in her case, that makes



And thus I found some relief, and was enabled to bless God for such a mercy, which comes to us now for the healing of the wounded and troubled spirits of mourning relatives and friends. May God help them to understand and receive this strong consolation. I sincerely believe that our dear young friend is in a far happier state than this. He has been removed from a world of troubles. He has gone before us a little while, and perhaps never could have gone more beloved, more lamented, or more prepared for an inheritance in glory.

Wherefore, beloved, comfort one another with these words. See amidst your affliction the evident tokens of the Divine favor. Let the spirit of patience and submission to the Divine will calm the tumult of your thoughts, that with a resigned, if not a rejoicing heart you may be able to say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, *blessed* be the name of the Lord."

me hesitate to send it. Also some letters in reference to which I have felt his request, that they should be private, to be sacred.

In all his communications however, is to be traced that prevailing disposition which for a long time he had indulged, indicating the presence and power of the blessed Spirit, leading him on to the knowledge and obedience of the truth.

# FUNERAL DISCOURSE

BY

REV. B. SUNDERLAND.

Jeremiah ix. 21.

“FOR DEATH IS COME UP INTO OUR WINDOWS AND IS ENTERED INTO  
OUR PALACES, TO CUT OFF THE CHILDREN FROM WITHOUT, AND THE  
YOUNG MEN FROM THE STREETS.”

SUCH is the record of human desolation. Now, as of old, the skeleton form treads on, darkening our habitations and smiting down the loving and the beloved.

“The gray-haired and the sunny-haired,  
Are sleeping side by side.”

We have seen a case but a few days since—one case, indeed, of many—but one which strikes home heavily, because *death* was so sudden, and came so near!

Young men, there are many among you, who know of whom I speak. He was your friend and companion. And now that his ashes are mingling with the mother elements, you would not willingly forget him. Suffer me, therefore, to recall the

memory of WILLIAM GUNTON, to sketch in brief the outline of his life, and to set before you the lesson of his too early and lamented departure.

He was born in this city, in November, 1825. Some of you remember him, as he was in his childhood, ardent, impulsive, but frank and generous to a rare degree. Born to a competence, he had no ostentation. Cherished by family and friends, the centre of a large and familiar acquaintance, he never demitted the regard due to others, nor waved the reciprocities of interest and affection. His early years gave no ambiguous signal of what his after-life should be. His manhood was but the natural maturity, without much other change, of what his infancy and youth had been. Some men are gifted to inspire us with more than a current friendship. Few comparatively they may be; but he was one of them. None came to know him without some touch of that sympathy, exemplified of old, "surpassing the love of woman."

No doubt, it is a warm and living vision, which, having him for the central figure, now stirs in many a heart, and kindles afresh the associations of school-boy days and wandering sports, of books and travel, and the yet more sober scenes of a mutual experience. Many a message and many a testimony from his distant and scattered comrades, elicited by the

melancholy news, tell how large a place he had won and held in the estimations of all classes.

He was graduated at Yale College, in 1847; having enjoyed at New Haven, at Andover, and at several other places of distinction, the means of mental culture. But though thus highly favored by all that parental fondness or generosity could bestow, he had no ill-judged ambition. His mind informed and his taste attuned to the embellishments of art,—his character elevated by classic influence, and polished in the schools, he yet lost none of that simplicity, none of that habitual regard for religious things, which he exhibited from the first.

He chose the pursuit of the husbandman, was married in June, 1848, and after a time was delightfully settled at Millwood, with all the charms and endearments which prosperity and the society around him could furnish to his happiness. He was thus brought into closer relations with the church and the parish of the Rev. Mr. Martin, an Episcopal clergyman.

And there his usefulness, like a blossom, seemed just unfolding. There did he devote his labor, not only to the noble aims of his chosen avocation, but also, with his beloved wife, to the still nobler aims of the Christian religion and the worship of God.

It was a beautiful picture, comprising as much of the light, with as little of the darkness, as men usually see on earth.

Look at him there, a young man with every earthly advantage, yet with none of the corrupted habits which ease and affluence commonly produce, with no itching for the applause of an empty name, turning away from the temptations of a political career, and from the devious and dangerous walks of public life, that he might confer a dignity on that most manly of all pursuits, which, honored in itself, lies at the foundation of every worldly prosperity, and while fulfilling the Divine law of labor, leads back the soul, through the purer channels of nature, to the sweet and salutary communion of our heavenly Father.

Without disparaging other legitimate vocations, next to that of the missionary of the cross, it were wiser to prefer and prize the employments of agriculture, in the simplicity of its home-bred life, and in the influence it sheds on all the higher virtues of humanity. A world of mischief and enormity would cease, if this department of human enterprise were more generally esteemed and more universally prosecuted.

The first and finest recollections in the soul, are of scenes in a farming district, of the homestead

where father and mother lived, where lay the ancestral burial-ground and rose the village church. From places so consecrated, one call alone had power to lure me away—the paramount duty of preaching to my fellow-men the salvation of the cross—I therefore here record my testimony for the use of every young man who is disposed to profit by it, that next to the work of the Christian ministry, I would have chosen the pursuit of husbandry, as the wisest way to serve my God and my fellow-men. This also was the judgment of our departed friend. And the pastor and the church were just beginning to lean upon him, and father and friends were rallying around him to partake his joys. The path of the upright had unfolded before him, and Providence was smiling on the spirit of his plans and the openings of his life.

But the cup of our discipline is mingled with bitter dregs, and who can evade that shadow which falls on the happiest human heart? Aside from the common troubles which cloud the brightest day, he had three special griefs: the loss of his now sainted mother, when he was but yet a youth; a loss which none can know save those who feel,—the loss of his first-born: the lamb taken by the great Shepherd because He loved it much, and would thereby draw its parents toward the heavenly fold,—and his last

deep grief, the death of his idolized wife, which fell on him like a great darkness, but little more than a year ago. None but God doth know what work went on apace in that sad heart, when at these times of sorrow, he saw no stable hope on earth, and felt how life itself, "is but a winter's day—a journey to the tomb."

I cannot dwell on these dark shades—I cannot describe to you that furnace of affliction wherein he walked in the first flush of morn, so soon to be overcast. But this we hope, he walked not there alone. ONE Mighty to Save stood by him, and by that presence, composed his weary spirit, and bade him look beyond "this vale of tears," where wife and child, and mother and friends had reached the final home before him.

I follow him during his last year on earth. I see him struggling with a burdened heart. I hear his voice of prayer in secret places. I count the silent tears that fall upon a fresh made mound, as more than once, he kneels, kissing the hallowed earth, in yonder cemetery. I see two children about his knees, motherless now, while convulsed with images of her who bore them, he stifles down his sighs, and smiles into the little faces through swimming eyes. I see him making the round of dwellings, where kindred welcomes salute the loaded pilgrim ;

but among them all he tells no wish to live or to linger here. The spell of eternity is upon him. It seems, some heavenly voice had whispered in his soul, for I hear him speak of the coming day when he shall follow the objects of his love.

And there all the year about, he walks under the night but makes no murmur. God is dealing with his soul, and he ripens towards his change. His church grows dear,—his pastor writes to him,—his mind is now made up,—and Christ his Redeemer is nearer than all. He comes to the city, to receive confirmation, as an open disciple of the cross. A providence suspends the consummation of his purpose. But the altar is erected in his desolate household, and there, among domestics and friends, the master of the family lifts up the voice of prayer.

I begin to see now into the inner life of one whose retiring diffidence would have concealed him from the public gaze. I see his natural virtues crowned by the excellency of that faith which is in Christ. In the written correspondence with pastor and friends he breathes out a soul imbued with the spirit of the great salvation. The year has been dark, and yet a new light has sprung up : with that light, the impression deepens in his mind that death to



him will come quickly. A heavenly voice has whispered it again.

Another providence brings him to this house of God. I see him in his place upon the holy Sabbath. Alas, it seems but yesterday since he was here. How with upturned countenance and eager attention he listened to that message! I did not think it would be his last. That Sabbath saw him kneeling, as the sun declined, and weeping in the bitterness of his heart, once more and only once, upon that spot, so consecrated among the graves! As he turned away, emerging from the trees, again the heavenly voice forewarned him, and to a friend he said, "I shall not live another year." It was God preparing him for the summons. One more sunrise, and then another and the last, at least to consciousness, with him.

It was a bright and sunny day, as you all remember. There was still a returning joy in the household as the dawn broke forth—for the fragments of a scattered family were gathered, and the day gave promise to paternal pride and the sympathies of kindred. One had just arrived from her distant residence, pale and broken by lingering disease, yet it was her anniversary. In that *one*, daughter and sister, mother and wife were all bound up; and over all, in that one, mingled the mysterious lights and

shades of the strange and deep experience of earth. At her coming, happiness and hope rekindled on the altar that had been showered with tears. The family tree, so sternly smitten, put forth that day its leaves of green, and the old and earlier pleasure ran back through the heart like the flush of summer beauties. It was a home-picture—faint resemblance of the final gathering on a brighter shore! Eyes, that whilom, were dim, looked love into each other. Wishes of welfare and mutual congratulations quelled for the moment, the aching of hearts that trembled in view of anticipated sorrow. On that day he sat in the domestic circle and around a father's board, speaking words of pleasantness. The cloud seemed parted, and returning smiles lighted the features, that, so long shadowed, were destined soon to fall under a more fearful blackness.

And so for an hour of recreation, in the conscious strength of his manhood, he went forth that day from his father's house. You know the painful casualty, which so suddenly transpired. I have no heart to tell it, nor yet the anguish that then smote into the dwelling of his loves. It was the work of a moment. As the sun fell westering, one start there was—one plunge, and he lay quivering and insensible on the hard street. He knew no more. They brought him back, and laid him on his couch

to die. The watchers stood beside him,—friends that would have wrung their heart's blood out, to have heard him speak. But the lamp of life burned feebly. He lay beyond the physician's skill, beyond affection's voice, beyond all earthly power. The flame flickered towards the week's end, and on Saturday, the 1st of April, 1854, he expired. The pulse grew still, and the pilgrimage was ended. But though a deep silence reigned over his going, it is our joy to think that when the clay mantle fell, the delivered spirit sprung up to heaven, with an instant outburst of the triumphant halleluiah.

We have conveyed his ashes, with reverent service to their resting-place. Many a cheek was wet that day, and many a heart all too sad, as the long procession followed him away.

Into the deeper private griefs of afflicted kindred we may not further penetrate. Too sacred is that circle, where the blow of Heaven has smitten. God only knows the anguish of those wounds, He only can bind up and heal.

But on the day of burial, I saw many young men whose tearful look and quivering lips bespoke the attachment which death had broken up. Dear brethren, I see you now. Give me your hearing. We have stood together by that grave. We have seen him fall from the full and flowering tree of our

manhood, with the dew of youth upon him. And now that he is gone, we would not lose the wisdom which grows from his hallowed mound. Thoughts from the sepulchre are winging this message with new force and warning into the soul by the memory of his example. Let me therefore unfold that lesson of God and your own destiny, for it is not always that you and I will have such friends to bury or such words to speak.

It is right to make the character of the dead a pattern to the living, especially so far as it tends to the maintenance of rectitude in human conduct—for being mortal, this beloved and lamented young man was not without his imperfections, and none more than he was ready to confess them. None better knew than he the need of a higher basis than human goodness in order to that perfection which reigns alone in heaven. But there were virtues in his life which, as of practical value, I feel bound most heartily to commend to your faithful imitation.

I. First then to his habits of personal discipline. He was singularly temperate in all things. Temperance is that virtue which comprises almost the whole of the excellency of our earthly life. A firm stand against excess and “the excitement of the reason and the blood,” is indispensable to him who would save himself or contribute to the good order

of society. What a mass of shame and wretchedness might be spared to the population of this city alone, if the proper habits, on two or three subjects, were prevalent among the young men. I refer to the customs of eating and drinking, of spending the Sabbath and of social amusement. I know, my young brethren, that in these regards you live in a pestilent atmosphere. In the so-called higher circles you witness examples that cover the cheek with blushes. In the lower quarters, you feel attractions that would draw you into scenes of dissipation and of ruin. There are always sources of corruption in a community like this,—enough to lie in wait for youth's hot temper, for the hasty passions, for the blindness of inexperience, for the debauchery of the conscience and the pollution of the heart,—enough to provoke the insidious temptation, and to inflame the appetites till the unsuspecting victim is reeling down the path of destruction, and men point him out for pity or for scorn. You see the mischief of it in others. You speak of it among yourselves. The nearest companion, if thus addicted, does not escape your scrutiny—perhaps your censure. It is singular, indeed, that men, themselves smitten with the fiery greed of uncontrolled appetite, will coolly deliberate on the proclivities of an acquaintance, extending compassion to others which should be

elicited no less towards themselves. If you, my brethren, have entered on this course, let me entreat you to pause. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," that which before you are aware, may destroy your prospects and pollute your name forever!

II. Again, he was a serious and sober-minded young man. Perhaps there is nothing to which you are more liable, certainly nothing more injurious, than levity of mind in regard to religious things. Men who are full of the vigor and elasticity of youth, mingling in gay scenes, where mirth and revelry are charged with a profane or vulgar spirit, must inevitably lose their reverent sense of sacred things. The high and quick apprehension of the solemn claims and truth of God is soon deadened, and perishes in such an atmosphere. There is little left in a mind so paralyzed, to which the more exalted views of life and duty can be addressed. It is likely to sink into a worse than brute-existence, having no ambition but for sensual indulgence. Then the soul that should have been refreshed by the waters of salvation and drawn the impulse of its life from the source of its divine origin, lies grovelling in the earth-born pools of corruption, a degraded and shameful thing seeking its desire in pitfalls—the theatre, the cock-pit, the gaming-table, the race-ground and the drinking-

saloon—while its great immortal destiny is unheeded or despised. The effect of such a tendency is most disastrous to the vital convictions of men. It assumes that religion itself may be treated as a football for our sport, and that all the deeper verities of human destiny are fit only to be bandied through the world, by such as neither recognize their nature nor submit to their authority. It must be a nobler spirit to keep men alive to a sense of their momentous obligations; and he is doing an untold service to his kind, who, whether in his private example or by his public conduct, maintains before the world, a refined and sacred regard for spiritual and eternal things. There is a reciprocal influence between the institutions of a people and the people themselves. If, therefore, the pulpit exerts a mighty power upon the community, so in return will the community mould to a great extent the ministrations of the pulpit. There is an electric power which, though hidden, still leaps from heart to heart, till, gathering up, it springs both light and shock, and then the effects appear. That which has its seat far back in the invisible elements of the masses, shall come at length to be spoken in the streets and published on the house tops. Now since such a power lingers in the masses, and every young man is a portion of those masses, should he prove to be

in himself an embodiment of spiritual rectitude, he shall effect a glorious result in the consummations of his life, although the origin of those consequences may rest with himself in unexposed obscurity. To this high vocation let me urgently entreat you. In the sphere of your appointment, let no word or action of assault upon the religion of Christ or upon the Church of Christ escape you. Cast away forever those sacrilegious weapons, which have, alas, already prostrated so low the moral forces of evangelism, and made infidelity as current in our land as the waters in our streams.

III. Again, I observe, he had a remarkably candid and straight-forward mind. He had no evasions of speech, no secrets of thought to cover up. Not only is this essential to personal happiness, but it is also indispensable to the confidence of our fellow-men, and finally to success in the undertakings of life. In the ordinary walks of business, it is this great delinquency of young men, which so often disappoints parental expectations, which deprives them of employment, robs them of place and position, and undermines the structure of all their fortunes, both *here* and for the *hereafter*. It is this want of *frankness*, this lack of moral courage, that drive so many into sinuosities and prevarications, which blight the soul and desolate the whole career



of life. It is the demon's business, my young brethren, to lead you into these crooked ways, to degrade and discomfort you by the entanglements of a web, which your own hands have complicated. Let me entreat you to be open-hearted and open-handed, and at whatever personal sacrifice to meet every responsibility full in the face. Cower not, but look up manfully, and say to the charge, "I have done wrong,"—to the misfortune, "I am able to bear it,"—to the temptation, "By all means, no!" Say to every call of duty, "Yes, with all my soul!" That is your part, and it is a noble part. We see what it makes of a man here, and what it makes of the memory of a man when he has gone from among us, to return no more. One of the strongest ties of his friendship, and that which afterwards sweetens and consecrates our recollections, is this transparency of character, a sense of reliance which he thus everywhere inspired.

IV. I observe again, he was submissive under affliction. When it came, it drove him not to the church only, but to his Saviour and his God. We cannot tell how much he suffered, as one after the other the blows fell. He was not boisterous in his grief, but covered it silently in the depths of his soul, and there it wrought out for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

How, then, is it with you?—for you too, doubtless, have known heavy sorrows. I call back your minds to the day when you first looked on the face of a friend sinking under the great shadow. Was it father or mother, was it brother, sister, wife or child,—was it some fond companion with whom your life had been bound up? Think over and revive that parting scene. How bitter was the cup, how the heart ached unto bursting, when they told you that death had done its work. How the tears fell scalding, by that now distant grave. How desolate were the days of that mourning! Yet did it make you an infidel or a Christian? As you walked in that night of gloom, did your heart soften towards God and your fellow-men? Did you seek relief in prayer? Did you find Christ? Or trusting to the paralysis of time and the mitigations of worldly pleasure, have you since overcome those wounded sensibilities and hardened your whole nature, and gone on farther and farther astray from God and from heaven? Nay, let me remind you of that hour when a heavy hand was laid upon yourself, and you saw the grave open to receive you. It was a time of misgiving, and you made a covenant with God. He seemed to have taken you at your word and restored you from trouble. But where is that word now? It was spoken in the lone chamber, in the

silence of midnight, when the fever was on and the vision of eternity passed vividly before you. But now you have forgotten it! Yet there is *One* who who has remembered—it is written in a book, your long-neglected oath!

Not so was it with your lamented companion. He knew the hand that had smitten him. He heard the voice which spoke from heaven, and when the full time came he was ready for the summons. He went just when, as it seems to human calculation, he could have been more useful than ever in the church on earth—just when he had begun to feel a warmer attachment and to betoken a deeper interest for the cause of Zion. He went when men could least spare him, and the vacancy he has left is indeed most void and painful. He went out of the ranks of the first, best hope of his generation—of the flower of the church, the country, and the age. He went from a gratified family-circle, having father and kindred to do for him, what nature prescribes that the younger, the rather, should do for the aged. But he went not in vain, for, as we hope, it was to the bosom of the heavenly Father. He went thus early to meet the waiting spirits from whom he had been separated. He went, at the call of the Master, to a higher husbandry, to a more spiritual and exalted service.

In our hearts, we have said farewell,—we have bid our last adieus to him, till haply meeting on the brighter shore, we shall recount the mysteries of this earthly discipline, and wonder forever that we are at last in heaven.

In view then of that example of our friend, which even now makes his name and his memory so precious, shall we not take home its lesson to our hearts? Can we find no stimulus in the open grave, no fire in his buried ashes, to warm us into life—that higher life by which a man shall live through faith in the Son of God? It is said of Luther, that he had a college friend, Alexis, who was fearfully and violently summoned out of the world. As he stood over the grave, while tears of unaffected grief ran down his cheeks, he exclaimed, “What would become of me, if *I* were thus unexpectedly called away!” Not long after this, he was approaching the Academy of Erfurth, when he was overtaken by a violent storm. The thunder rolled, and a shaft of lightning sank into the ground at his feet. Luther falls upon his knees. He sees, as though his hour had already come. Death, judgment, and eternity are there in terror before him. But there, under the pelting storm, he makes his vow unto God. If delivered from this danger, he will devote the spared life to His service. The storm lulls, the

elements are soothed, and Luther, like Paul, cries out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" You may not, my young brethren, be startled into repentance by a circumstance like this. But will you not hear the voice that has already spoken? Why should he be taken and you left? Does something remain for you to do? Have you no work which the Sovereign Disposer is still granting you an occasion to accomplish?

For whom death comes, and how soon it may come, God only knows. How would you have it find you—in the full flush and vigor of a Christian's activity, or only as a saunterer in the pilgrimage, indifferent alike to the direction and the terminus? I think of your inmost reflections, as I urge the practicalities of religion upon you. I know the weariness and lassitude of the mind,—I know the vague and indefinable reluctance, before the sight of the universe to commit the whole life to the service of God and the whole soul to the salvation of the cross. I know how the struggle of the mind goes on,—how the purpose half-formed and lifted up, falls back upon the spirit like a garment of heaviness. I know those deep and dumb aspirations, which in the better moments spring up towards God and heaven, and then how the chill and the darkness of the world come on, and the days,

and weeks, and years are gone, and you have determined but have not performed, and your doings have fallen behind your desires, and those great duties lie untouched which long ago should have been discharged. There, as the mind vacillates, the world grows stormy, a veil is on the temple of religion, the things of God and religion seem to melt away as in a dream, and the warnings which once bestirred the soul, have died away from your consciousness. And so, and so is it,

“To-morrow and to-morrow creeps in this  
Petty pace”—

from day to day. Oh, let it not thus go out like a

“Brief candle.”

Let not life be worse than wasted, and so death seize you, and the grave cover you, and the realms of perdition await you as a reprobate from the infinite mercy of the almighty Redeemer.

For again, I say, you know the value of life determined by the religion of the Gospel. You know that when a young man's years have been enriched by the devotion of his earliest and best affections, his course filled up with glorious achievements, his fight of faith finished in his fidelity to the last, he may die young indeed, but he has left his seal upon the circle, and perhaps upon the age in which he

lived. It is not death which impairs society so much, but that irreligion which deteriorates the essential value of human existence. Alas! how many victims of corruption had better died long since, ere they turned aside forever from the walks of piety and virtue. Better had they been housed in the grave before they had gone astray in the aberration of a reprobate existence, impelled by inward lusts and passions, yielding to outward lures and enticements, giving out under misfortune, or plunging, all reckless in their hilarity, into the vortex of destruction. Ah, what has life been since they took their first false step? Who will mourn for them when they die—perchance, who will know when, or where, or how they take their final obit to Gehenna? Who shall regret their departure? Nay, when the besom comes and sweeps them through the grave, the world shall breathe freer, and good men rejoice that a curse has been wiped out. And yet they were once in the innocence of youth. Once they struggled and resolved, as you do now, but temptation was too strong—death found them, but too late, they had gone over the precipice. The grave itself had been forestalled by a more fearful ruin. Who can wish to die like this—die in the pauperism of the soul—die in the penury of noble deeds—die without having filled the measure of his

days with the fulness of some heaven-born purpose which can never die? You therefore know the worth of life under the Gospel's light, and you know that to lose that worth of life is worse than to lose the life itself.

To what result then do these reflections bring you? Oh, you especially who have wept, and could not withhold it, as you stood by the grave of your departed comrade, what remains for you but to make the choice he made, and assume the Christian name and profession, as he was about to do? For what is it after all, so far as human instrumentality is concerned, but to use in a rational manner our rational powers, and in that use to surrender ourselves to God, in the time of acceptance and the day of salvation. Then He, by His eternal spirit, shall do all the rest!

I do confess that all the questions of this life dwindle into insignificance, not from indifference or insensibility towards them, but when contrasted with the relations which we sustain, with the position which we assume in reference to the religion and to the church of Jesus Christ. Here we are, pilgrims on the way. Yonder rolls the river to which we must sooner or later come. And there, on the other side, are the spirits who have gone before. Shall not our *eternity* issue from the drift and



direction of our *time*? Shall not “he that is unjust be unjust still,” and “he that is righteous be righteous still?” There is then but one hope—our transformation must be *here*, for *there* it can be never. The good shall go from these shores to a higher state of goodness, the bad shall go to a more wretched condition of badness. These are the conditions of our being, hinging often upon the merest contingency. One quick blast, one sudden plunge, one casual misstep and all is over! The circumstance is on its way to end the earthly existence of every one of you. The shaft to strike you down is already pointed!

Oh, my soul! art not thou afraid when gazing above, beneath, around, thou seest God’s hand stretched out in many symbols of human desolation. I looked so recently on the features of our beloved friend, alive with thoughts which the truth from heaven had kindled—and then for the last time as they were exposed to the tearful gaze of our nature’s tenderest affection—and I said within me, “It is God only who can thus change the countenance of man and send him suddenly away.” And as I stood by it, I prayed to heaven, for it was a shock that smote me, and my soul was dumb at the work of dissolution. I feel if I could but just now interpret in perfect language the lesson which then sank into my being,

God should lend me a tongue to persuade you, and cause you to submit to Him in this hour of saving mercy. There would wake within you a chord responsive to this strong word of Providence. He only knows your heart, your mind, your inmost soul on these momentous questions. But we know also, that it shall not be long when all will be resolved. Should we hereafter, as now, be called to speak some words before the burial of one of you, who had not died in the faith and hope of Jesus, we could not find it in such a death, to console our minds with the vain imagination, that though you had lived and died in sin, yet you too had doubtless been received into the "house of many mansions." For, be assured, dear to you as our friend and brother was—dear as a son, dear as a companion, dear as a spirit of joy and brightness moving in the social sphere and lighting up the household—had it not been found upon examination of his more private life, and his more recently avowed intentions—had it not been found in his almost prophetic impression of a sudden summons, that he knew and walked with his Redeemer, and so had settled the mightiest question of his earthly history, I could not have come to this affecting task with such a solace, nor in the firm faith of my spirit, could I have repeated over his sepulture, that glorious epi-

taph of the departed Christian, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

Amen.

THE END.









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